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December 1989

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2009-0609-MR
ES 8126110

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1989 DEC 22 PM 8:32

10215

December 22, 1989

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT 
SUBJECT: U.S. Diplomacy for the New Europe

Historians are likely to view 1989 as a year, like 1848, which transformed a continent. The past is irretrievably gone, but the future remains cloudy. The eroding Soviet political and military presence and influence in Central and Eastern Europe, and the prospect of a reunited Germany eighty million strong, are rapidly changing European politics. Our diplomatic approach will need to change too, acquiring new intensity and suppleness. No other nation can undertake the singular American role in this dangerous period.

You have laid the groundwork by forcefully articulating our goals for the future of Europe and of Germany. The components of our approach -- active support for democratic change in Eastern Europe, the search for a new security environment through the CFE process, the continuation of nuclear deterrence, and an American partnership with a more united continent -- are welcome in Europe. U.S. objectives have become, by and large, the Alliance's objectives. Now, having set the agenda, we need to use our policy instruments to help make these things happen, to remain, as you have said, a "European Power."

As the confrontation with the Warsaw Pact fades, there is a natural tendency to understate the new political and economic forces that are being unleashed. When the democratic revolutionaries of 1848 were at the peak of their success, cowing kings and toppling princes, they thought the remaking of society would overshadow the old diplomatic rivalries. Victor Hugo speaking for the firebrands in Paris, put it best when he said that: "We are a predestined generation. We have bigger and more frightening tasks than our ancestors. We have not time to hate each other." Just as this hope was romantic and wrong then, it is romantic and wrong now. The outlines of ancient European antagonisms are already beginning to emerge.

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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The most important element of the current period is the Soviet Union's retreat from Eastern Europe, a reversal unrivaled in the history of the U.S.S.R. since the Soviets made peace with the Germans in 1918. Moscow's policy toward Eastern Europe is in a shambles and Gorbachev finds himself unable to shape the sweeping political events there. The Soviets have attempted to make a virtue of necessity -- encouraging reform in hopes of maintaining influence in Eastern Europe by diplomatic means rather than by coercion.

But this tactic cannot mask the fact that the Soviet leadership faces a deadly set of circumstances in the coming years -- political and economic chaos at home; diminishing influence in Eastern Europe; and the looming prospect of German reunification. The Politburo is now -- and will continue to be -- insecure and nervous about the course of events in Europe. No one can predict how Moscow will adapt to this tumultuous environment. Given the significant Soviet military presence in Europe -- a presence that will be maintained in any event by virtue of geography -- Moscow's unpredictability carries significant dangers for the West. Not surprisingly, Gorbachev now so worries about the Germans that he wants the United States to play an active and moderating role in Europe well into the next century.

The revival of the German question will be no less a critical factor in the 1990's than the Soviet Union's decline, including for Gorbachev's grip on power and for perestroika. West Germany enters this decade wielding economic power unrivaled on the Continent and with the potential to dominate the monetary and macroeconomic policies of a more united EC. The Germans can use that economic clout to renew their historic political influence on a fragmented Eastern Europe. The spectre of German power, particularly if the two Germanys reunify, will lead Britain and France to seek new political arrangements to protect their interests. Italy will push hard for recognition as a major actor, aligning and realigning itself to serve that goal. The smaller Allies will be inclined to revert to the 19th century diplomatic pattern of cutting the best deals they can.

Increasingly because of the German problem, the Soviets are pushing -- successfully -- for the widest possible diplomatic engagement in Europe and the West Europeans are reciprocating. In the last two weeks, as well as meeting with you, Gorbachev also hosted Mitterrand in Kiev and Genscher in Moscow. Moscow requested, and achieved, the reactivation of Four-Power mechanisms at a level and intensity unknown in two decades. Shevardnadze just held an unprecedented meeting with NATO Secretary General Woerner. Mitterrand, at his joint press conference in Kiev, referred to a return to more active Franco-Soviets bilateral relations. The FRG Ambassador at the CFE talks now consults as intensively with the Eastern Europeans as with his NATO counterparts. Kohl had more consultation with Gorbachev than with you before presenting his ten-point plan for

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reunification, and Mitterrand and Kohl are both visiting East Germany this week.

The EC's political role is growing rapidly as well. Discussions among West European leaders are continuous and largely independent of us. There have been two EC summits since mid-November. EC Foreign Ministers and their staffs meet twenty to thirty times a year. A generation of West European diplomats has emerged, habituated to constant interaction with their colleagues, whom they have known well and worked with for years. A good illustration of this new kind of diplomatic relationship is COMEU, an electronic communications network linking the EC capitals for daily faxing and exchanges of cables, position papers, and other information on foreign policy problems of common interest, totaling thousands of messages each year. In your pre-Malta telephone calls to NATO leaders, you witnessed just how much of their own thinking had been influenced by the November 18 EC Summit in Paris. And as we move toward 1992, the Community's economic decisions will have decisive consequences for the United States.

You have already devoted much time and effort this year to cultivating our European relationships. We will need to maintain this degree of commitment at all levels, and expand it. NATO is still irreplaceable, but the EC -- with which our enhanced dialogue is promising but still embryonic -- will become ever more important to us as time passes.

The United States is at a strategic crossroads in Europe. We will either find a way to keep up with the intensifying pace of diplomatic interaction on the Continent or we will drift away from the inner workings and direction of European politics. This may cause us, in turn, to fall prey at home to a new form of isolationism -- detachment by default rather than by choice. That could be tragic for European stability and for America's world leadership role, which would diminish greatly if our partnership with Europe waned.

No issue will test our real influence and diplomatic skills more than the potential reunification of Germany. A French diplomat expressed to an American colleague recently a oft repeated refrain in the past century. "The Germans are the only people who are never satisfied with what they have on the Continent. They always need more. It will never end." The U.S. must not be seen as opposing the aspirations of the German people for national unity. We want to tie the Germans to the West, not create new sources of resentment like those of the 1920s. Yet we can accept the eventual goal of reunification while at the same time using our diplomacy skillfully to try to keep the process gradual and carefully managed.

We must also play an active role in an entirely new situation in Eastern Europe. With the virtual collapse of Communist rule in

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Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR, a power vacuum is developing. This presents both risks -- of a Federal Republic willingly drawn in to fill the void, and in the process slipping from its western moorings -- and opportunities for a much more robust and a constructive U.S. role in the center of Europe.

The opportunities can only be exploited if we follow through systematically on your policy goals. NATO and nuclear deterrence must be kept vital in these new circumstances. Your four points on German reunification must be reinforced and translated into a program for consultations associated with the "step by step" process we envision. We should strengthen our resources, human and financial, to engage Eastern Europe more actively and update our policies to reflect the rapidly evolving situation there. Our objective of partnership with a stronger EC also needs to be manifested in concrete actions. And we must stay in closest possible touch with Gorbachev and his colleagues as events in Europe plunge on.

The key in the period ahead will be our ability to: 1) manage those elements of our European policies that are still inherently bloc to bloc (especially the military competition and arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union); while 2) we engage fully in a complex European diplomatic environment which reflects the return, after half a century, of a shifting search for a classical balance of power on the Continent. Twentieth century history gives no encouragement to those who believe the Europeans can achieve and sustain this balance of power and keep the peace without the United States.

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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12/19/89
1750

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

THROUGH: ROBERT D. BLACKWILL RB

FROM: PHILIP ZELIKOW Z

SUBJECT: U.S. Diplomacy for the New Europe

Brent --
I hope you like
this memo. We over
here believe it's
important.

RB Blackwill

I attach for your review a memorandum to the President on the challenges to U.S. diplomacy of present events in Europe.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I.

Attachment:

Tab I Memorandum to the President

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White House Guidelines

E.O. 13526, SEC 3.4 (b), September 11, 2006

By 8 NARA, Date 3/23/10

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RECEIVED: 19 DEC 89 15

TO: PRESIDENT

FROM: SCOWCROFT

DOC DATE: 22 DEC 89
SOURCE REF: 

KEYWORDS: EUROPE EAST

EUROPE WEST

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: US DIPLOMACY FOR NEW EUROPE

ACTION: NOTED BY PRES

DUE DATE: 22 DEC 89

STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: ZELIKOW

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

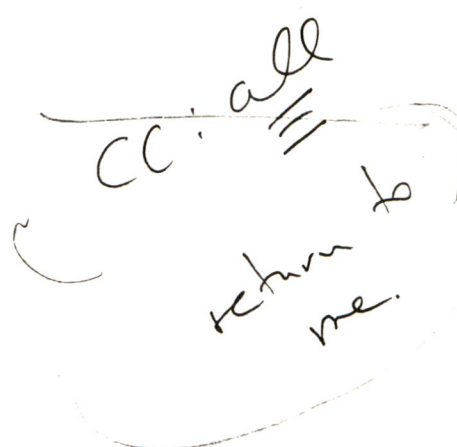
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ZELIKOW



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White House Guidelines
E.O. 13526, SEC 3.4 (b), September 11, 2006
By 1 NARA, Date 7/5/11

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WASHINGTON

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